

Effective *In-Service Training* for Early Care and Education Practitioners

What Is In-Service Training?

In-service training is the term used for training staff within a specific program or school. In-service training can be an effective method for helping staff develop skills and knowledge necessary to become strong members of a program's staff and effective teachers/caregivers working with young children and their families.

Who Can Facilitate In-Service Training?

Facilitators of in-service training should have specialized training in the content area (for example, fire safety is appropriately offered by trained fire fighters, health issues are addressed by public health nurses or other health care practitioners). Experience is invaluable, but current understanding and knowledge of subject matter is essential to ensure accurate information. All professions require knowledgeable trainers for continuing education.

Every community has many resource people willing and able to provide training in specific content areas. Child care resource and referral staff, public health departments, fire departments, extension agents, professional early childhood associations, school district personnel, licensed professional counselors, health care professionals, social workers, special and family service staff, business owners, accountants, nutritionists, college faculty and others may be presenters to tap for their expertise. Some directors facilitate in-service training or ask specific staff members who have specialized skills and talents to facilitate training around a specific topic. The Trainer Directory posted on the ECP website may help you find a trainer in your area in a certain Knowledge Base content area or you may call the ECP for ideas.

How Do I Plan Training To Maximize Its Impact On The Quality Of Our Program?

Have each staff member complete a self-assessment using the Knowledge Base or assess their competence on a regular basis so an individualized training plan may be created for each person. The Knowledge Base is designed to be a useful tool for assessing staff skills, knowledge and dispositions and/or for focused observation of an individual's interactions with children, parents, and co-workers.

When Is The Best Time To Schedule In-Service Training?

Scheduling of in-service training can be challenging and needs to be at a time when staff can fully participate. It is important to compensate staff in some way for attendance to make it worth their time (i.e. pay them, feed them, and make it a well-planned learning opportunity in a supportive environment).

How Can I Make In-Service Training More Dynamic And Effective?

It is important to be familiar with adult learning principles when working with adults in training settings. Seek out resources about how adults learn to help you plan meaningful workshops and courses. Complete the Adult Learning Series for Montana trainers that is offered annually in three separate day-long sessions.

How Do I Learn More About Trainer Opportunities In Montana?

If you are conducting in-service training, please submit the Trainer Directory Application with your resume to the ECP so we can add you to the on-line Trainer List Serv. Then you will receive the *Training Solutions* e-newsletter and invitations to Adult Learning events as they are offered annually. Again, call the ECP to request an application or visit our website to download one.

How Are Other Early Childhood Program Directors Offering In-Service Training?

Be creative about how you organize in-service training. In some communities, child care center directors collaborate to offer training for their staff. It is planned so each director is responsible for a particular portion of the training. This promotes interaction between staff from different centers. Head Start, Early Head Start and early childhood professional organizations may be potential partners for training collaborations.

Most directors understand the benefit of their staff attending community-based training events so that they meet and get to know other people in the early childhood profession. Learning takes place when a diverse group of people from a variety of early childhood programs share their ideas and experiences with one another.

The ECP recommends that all early care and education practitioners seek a blend of training that enriches their knowledge and skills through community-based, in-service and distance learning options to meet their professional development needs. (Check with the ECP before enrolling in distance learning).

Can In-Service Training Be Approved?

In-service training may be approved through the Montana Early Childhood Project if it relates to the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base and is at least two hours in length. Approval enables staff to count in-service training hours for Merit Pay, annual required training hours for the Montana Practitioner Registry, and for state child care licensing requirements.

How Do I Apply For Approval So Staff Receive Training Hours For Their Time?

Complete a Training Approval Application for each in-service training event you coordinate of two or more hours. All training approved through the ECP must have some element of personal interaction between the facilitator and the participant. (For example, if the training utilizes a video series, there must be some group discussion, assignment, individual conferencing, verbal or written feedback with each participant built into the training design.) This is required to assure that the participants understand the material and have opportunities to process the information and clarify the content.

Where Can I Find A Training Approval Application?

Applications may be found on the ECP website and submitted on-line or you may call the ECP for an application. Once the event is approved you will receive a sample certificate to copy and distribute to all participants who complete the training and an official sign-in sheet that you will need to send back to the ECP for the hours to be entered into each person's on-line training record.

Most in-service training is not open to the public, so we do not post in-service events on the Statewide Training Calendar on the ECP website. Please check the box on the Training Approval Application form that indicates your training event is not open to the public.



Early Childhood Project

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